

## **Programme Specification**

### **MA English**

Valid from: September 2012

**Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences**

## SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

Awarding body:	Oxford Brookes University
Teaching institution and location:	Oxford Brookes University
Final award:	MA
Programme title:	English
Interim exit awards and award titles:	PGCert, PGDip
Brookes course code:	HU50
UCAS/UKPASS code:	N/A
JACS code:	Q320
Mode of delivery:	Face to face, Taught, On-Campus
Mode/s of study:	Full-time, part-time
Language of study:	English
Relevant QAA subject benchmark statement/s:	<a href="http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/Subject-benchmark-statement-English.aspx">http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/Subject-benchmark-statement-English.aspx</a>
External accreditation/recognition: <i>(applicable to programmes with professional body approval)</i>	
Faculty managing the programme:	Humanities and Social Sciences
Date of production (or most recent revision) of specification:	September 2012

## SECTION 2: OVERVIEW AND PROGRAMME AIMS

### 2.1 Rationale for/distinctiveness of the programme

The MA English programme offers students the opportunity to study literatures of the British Isles and of the Anglophone world through a model of progressive focalisation and specialisation that teaches literary critical skills to postgraduate level in the context of periodised, thematised and theoretical modules. The emphasis on developing core discipline and research skills in the 'Key Concepts and Methods in

Humanities Research' module embeds subject knowledge and awareness. At the same time students embark on specific elective modules related to the advanced study of literary and/or cultural production from the Renaissance to the present day. This grounding in the social, intellectual, political and cultural drivers of literary development enable students to make an informed choice about the topic of their Dissertation which enables them to practise research methodologies of a high order and engage with a subject over a substantial piece of work.

## **2.2 Aim/s of the programme**

The overall aim is to deliver a high quality postgraduate programme in English that 'develops a flexible and responsive openness of mind' and illustrates the view that English is a 'versatile academic discipline' (QAA benchmarking statement).

More specifically the English programme aims to:

1. provide students with the opportunity to acquire advanced knowledge of aspects of English literature, language, and drama across a broad historical period, in a variety of genres, with a central focus on imaginative literary texts, and with due attention to the regional and global range of literatures in English;
2. develop a profound understanding and appreciation of a variety of sophisticated critical approaches to the study of literary texts and language, with attention to the structure, levels and discourse functions of both, and to the appropriate terminology for the discussion of these;
3. cultivate a sense of historical sensitivity through the study of literature from different historical periods;
4. give training and demand higher-level practice in the skills required for research, using both primary and secondary sources in both written and electronic form;
5. develop the capacity to gather, evaluate, synthesise and present evidence and critical approaches, and the ability to frame considered and appropriate research questions;
6. develop the ability to construct coherent arguments, and to communicate ideas clearly and effectively, both in written work and oral presentations;
7. inculcate habits of independent study and thought necessary for life-long learning and for further research or training;
8. prepare students for employment by developing transferable skills, including presentation and communication skills, problem solving, the ability to evaluate evidence, teamwork, and the ability to understand and use feedback.

## **SECTION 3: PROGRAMME LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Having completed this programme of study, students will be able to:

### **3.1 Academic literacy**

- demonstrate a wide, broad-based knowledge of approaches to the study of a wide variety of texts in English, displaying the ability to apply critical, theoretical, linguistic and historical concepts to the analysis of cultural production.

- determine and implement modes of critical interpretation which are appropriate to particular texts and effective for the purposes of literary analysis at postgraduate level.
- demonstrate a familiarity with a variety of fundamental issues that motivate and orient the contemporary understanding of English as an academic discipline.
- locate texts within appropriate historical, cultural, and intellectual contexts.
- produce well-conceived, well-researched and well-structured arguments supported by appropriate literary and theoretical evidence in both oral and written discussion.

### **3.2 *Research literacy***

- acquire substantial quantities of complex information of diverse kinds in a structured and systematic way and using a variety of resources.
- engage in research using scholarly information retrieval skills of a high order, involving the ability to gather, sift and organise material critically and with intellectual flexibility.
- accurately and rigorously cite primary and secondary sources within an approved system of scholarly reference.

### **3.3 *Critical self-awareness and personal literacy***

- develop to a high level advanced critical skills of textual analysis involving the evaluation of different critical, formalistic and theoretical approaches to literary texts and the study of language.
- recognise and challenge ways in which power relations (e.g. in terms of sexuality, gender, ethnicity, and class) are constructed and perpetuated in English language, literature and culture.
- communicate ideas and critical opinions effectively and with confidence in speech and writing, individually and in groups.
- develop time-management and advanced organisational skills, as shown by the ability to plan and present arguments and conclusions effectively.

### **3.4 *Digital and information literacy***

- use information-technology skills with word-processing and presentation programmes, and display an ability to access, process and produce electronic data as necessary.
- learn to evaluate critically a wide range of information resources (including digital, online and printed) and access databases and catalogues.
- display familiarity and competence with virtual learning platforms.

### **3.5 *Global citizenship***

- acquire a flexible appreciation of human diversity through the study of English as a global language with distinct variations across times, places and cultures.
- explore the treatment of issues of global significance through a range of creative and critical cultural products.

## SECTION 4: PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND CURRICULUM

### 4.1 Programme structure and requirements:

All students must complete the compulsory modules plus the required electives. Compulsory modules for the programme are:

P67001 Key Concepts and Methods in Humanities Research

P67099 Dissertation

The tables below show the full-time and part-time routes through the programme.

#### Full Time Mode

Semester 1	Semester 2	Summer
P67001 Key Concepts & Methods in Humanities Research**  (40 M Credits)	Elective 2**  (40 M Credits)	
Elective 1**  (40 M Credits)	P67099 Dissertation***  (60 M Credits)	

#### Part-time Mode

Semester 1	Semester 2	Summer 1
P67001 Key Concepts & Methods in Humanities Research**  (40 M Credits)	Elective 1**  (40 M Credits)	(Preparatory Work For Dissertation)
Semester 3	Semester 4	Summer 2
Elective 2 **  (40 M Credits)	P67099 Dissertation***  (60 M Credits)	

\*\* compulsory for PGCert and PGDip, \*\*\*Compulsory for MA

### **Approved Elective Modules**, (each rated at 40 credits)

- P67050 Spaces and Bodies in Early Modern English
- P67055 Shakespeare and his afterlife
- P67051 Romanticisms
- P67053 Victorian Texts: Visions and Revisions
- P67068 Modern and Contemporary Poetry and Poetics
- P67052 Modern and Contemporary Fiction
- P67054 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Texts

### **Progression to MA:**

Students must have obtained passes in P67001 and in 40 credits of approved elective modules before proceeding to the Dissertation Module, P67099. Part-time students will normally have completed all their elective module requirements (80 credits) before proceeding to P79099.

## **4.2 Professional requirements**

N/A

## **SECTION 5: PROGRAMME DELIVERY**

### **5.1 Teaching, Learning and Assessment**

**Seminars:** Teaching is mostly by small-group seminar. We value the close working environment enabled by small groups and therefore enrolments on elective modules will usually be limited to a maximum of 12 students. Some modules will be team-taught, in which case a team of staff will share the weekly sessions between them.

**Group discussion** is a key feature of seminar teaching. Prepared readings are usually set for weekly classes and students should be prepared to discuss these in the seminar with their peers. In each module students may be asked to give occasional presentations to the class on a prepared topic, either based on shared reading or on their own work-in-progress.

**Independent Study:** Academic work at Master's level requires a high degree of independently-motivated research and preparation. Students should expect to undertake an average of 30 (full-time Students) or 15 (part-time students) study hours per week, in addition to scheduled class time.

#### **Linking Teaching with Research**

Teaching at level 7 is all based on teams of staff working within historical or other conceptual frameworks within which their own research and scholarship is concentrated. Elective modules offer students the opportunity to work with a specialist in an academic area who is commonly researching and publishing in the area of her/his teaching.

#### **Internationalisation of the Curriculum**

The programme is informed intellectually by the global nature of English as a language of mass communication and by the impact of literature of the British Isles on global culture. On a modular level, elective modules often address cultural production outside the context of British writing through modules such as 'New York Stories', 'Literature and Madness', 'Writing on the Margins' and 'Reading Metafiction'. The central 'Key Concepts' module addresses critical and theoretical ideas from across the globe as a means of broadening students' intellectual horizons.

### **Relation to Brookes Assessment Compact**

The programme operates a broad portfolio of assessment methods that are closely tied to the principles of the BAC. Students encounter a number of forms of modular assessment designed specifically to test the skills and core knowledge identified in the Learning Outcomes. These may include oral presentation as both individuals and groups, coursework essays, critical reviews and logbooks. Students are encouraged to engage in self and peer assessment and have the opportunity to submit a self-assessment evaluation sheet with their work which can subsequently be discussed with a module tutor. In addition students are entitled to 30 minutes tutorial time for 40 credit modules in which they can discuss their work and receive feedback on assignments. Assessment methods are reviewed annually and fed through Module Reports and the Annual Review procedure and issues concerning assessment are regularly discussed with student reps at Programme and Departmental meetings.

### **5.2 Assessment regulations**

The programme conforms to the University Regulations:

<http://www.brookes.ac.uk/brookesnet/graduateoffice/documents/pgtregs.pdf>

## **SECTION 6: ADMISSIONS**

### **6.1 Entry criteria**

Applicants should normally hold a good honours degree (2:i or above), or its equivalent, in an appropriate discipline. Applicants will usually be interviewed.

Applicants whose first language is not English should hold one of the following qualifications:

- British Council (IELTS) Test: band 7 overall with at least 6 in each band
- TOEFL: 600 or better (paper based); 250 or better (computer based); 100 or better (internet based).
- Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency: grade C or above
- NEAB University Test in English for Speakers of Other Languages: Pass
- JMB Test in English for Overseas Students: grade 1, 2 or 3

### **6.2 CRB checks**

N/A

## **SECTION 7: STUDENT SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE**

Students receive support and guidance from the Subject team throughout their time at Brookes both in the infrastructural mechanisms of the department and in dedicated patterns of meetings to provide information about academic choices

- **Induction**

Students joining the university for the first time go through a week of induction activities organised by the department and the Programme Administrators. This involves meeting the department as a team and a one-to-one meeting with their Academic Adviser. They also have a Subject meeting in which the practicalities of university life at postgraduate level are explained, expectations of them are outlined and detailed instructions about times and places of classes are given. For International or Erasmus students, the Subject Co-Ordinator and the Programme Lead

ensure that there is a one-to-one induction meeting to familiarise them with the department's and Brookes' processes

- **Handbooks**

Subject handbooks are provided for students in print copy at the beginning of the course and they are expected to retain these for their time on the programme. This handbook is also made available to students through the postgraduate VLE. Additional handbooks for the Independent Study and Dissertation modules are made available during the course of study. All modules produce handbooks outlining aims, learning outcomes, teaching and assessment methods, syllabi, bibliographies etc.

- **Programme Administrators, Subject Co-Ordinators, Academic Advisers**

Each student has access to a range of supports from dedicated staff. All students can discuss their programmes with the Programme Administrator, the Subject Co-Ordinator and with their Academic Adviser. Subject Co-Ordinators manage the day-to-day running of the programme and provide advice and guidance to students on the academic decisions that they are required to make across their period of study. The Programme Lead works closely with the SC to ensure the smooth and efficient delivery of the degree and deals with issues referred on by AAs or the SC.

- **Study skills development/support**

Students have access to the academic support provided by the Upgrade service. They also have the opportunity to discuss their writing skills with the Royal Literary Fellows who sit within the department and are available for one-to one consultations on issues of presentation, style and expression.

- **Careers Centre**

The team works closely with the Careers service to ensure that information on future directions is available to all students. Members of the careers service are also present at Induction and are routinely invited into the Synoptic module to engage with students at the end of their academic study. The department has involvement in a number of careers events on an ongoing basis.

## SECTION 8: GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY

English graduates go on to a wide variety of jobs in a number of different employment sectors. The following list is indicative of common destinations but is in no way comprehensive:

Arts administration and management  
Charity work  
Civil Service  
Creative Industries  
Law  
Marketing  
Publishing  
Retail  
Teaching

## SECTION 9: LINKS WITH EMPLOYERS

The Subject team has positive relations and contacts with local employers in a number of areas (such as museum work, the leisure industry, marketing organisations, charities and NGOs), and these can be of

significant benefit to postgraduate students not considering continuing study. The team has also contributed to a number of careers events with local, national and international employers and has forged links through research-based activities with a variety of creative arts, healthcare and environmental projects.

## **SECTION 10: QUALITY MANAGEMENT**

### **Indicators of quality/methods for evaluating the quality of provision**

The programme is regularly monitored both internally and externally through the usual procedures of Periodic review and Annual Review, as well as the External Examiner's semesterly and annual reports on programme practices and policies. There are regular Programme Meetings during which matters of teaching and learning are directly addressed and at which Student Reps voice issues raised by their peers. These meetings feed up to the Departmental meeting, a year-ending Syllabus Review day, and inform the Annual Review. Consultation with students is routinely enacted at modular level both through a summative evaluation point at mid-semester and through the culminating modular evaluation questionnaire. Students also have the opportunity to voice concerns to Academic Advisers, the Programme Administrator, the Subject Co-Ordinator, the Programme Lead and the Head of Department.